

## **Myth-Buster:**

### **The Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative Second Generation Office Supplies Blanket Purchase Agreements (FSSI OS2)**

**MYTH: Some office supply items are found cheaper outside the FSSI OS2 BPA vehicles.**

**FACTS:**

- While government purchase card holders may find a cheaper price on certain items, FSSI OS2 BPAs offer better pricing overall. The message of the “market basket analysis” must be communicated to the end-user:

The FSSI OS2 commodity team studied the buying patterns of offices across the federal government and identified hundreds of the most frequently purchased office supplies and put them in a basket for vendors to bid on. The vendors that could meet the Government’s requirements and offered the lowest prices were awarded BPAs. While purchasers may be able to find single items within vendor catalogues that are cheaper than FSSI OS2 prices, the FSSI OS2 market basket of commonly purchased items is cheaper than a non-FSSI market basket of like products. The FSSI OS2 BPAs drive value and savings on commonly purchased office supplies.

- Instead of focusing on the individual items, end-users should focus on the broader benefits. Not only is pricing better, but you can be assured that using the FSSI BPAs will help your agency meet its socioeconomic and environmental goals and ensure that your purchases are compliant with relevant trade agreements. Additionally, the government is capturing significantly more business intelligence through these BPAs, and using these vehicles makes better use of your limited personnel resources.
- The agencies that had the most experience with managing their office supplies prices through their own BPAs prior to OS2 have uniformly agreed that the OS2 BPAs offer real savings over their previous BPAs as well as over most of the schedule pricing posted on GSA Advantage.

**MYTH: Non FSSI BPA vendors offer lower prices on GSA Advantage than FSSI OS2 BPA vendors.**

**FACT:** FSSI OS2 has been successful in driving office supply price reductions across the government by increasing competition among FSSI and non-FSSI vendors. Agencies committed to using the OS2 solution are estimated to save 7-11% annually on total office supplies purchases, with potential to achieve greater savings as volume tiers are reached. While some non FSSI BPA vendors may offer lower prices on GSA Advantage, these pricing tactics may be temporary and may only last 30 days. FSSI OS2 BPAs are designed to leverage the government’s combined volume to achieve volume discount tiers, therefore, providing customers with real discounts that increase with usage.

**MYTH: More savings can be attained by conducting extensive price comparisons than utilizing the FSSI BPA vehicles.**

**FACT:** The number of hours spent performing price comparisons could cost much more than any savings identified on a per-item basis. The BPAs were established on a competitive basis for a market basket of approximately 400 of the most frequently purchased items across the government. FSSI BPAs assist your agency in minimizing staff time and effort by ensuring that the vehicles are easy to use, therefore enabling them to focus on more important tasks.

**MYTH: FSSI OS2 BPAs limit small business participation and “kill” those small businesses that were not awarded an FSSI BPA.**

**FACTS:**

- Over 85% of the awardees are small businesses and, of those, three (3) are service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.
- Today under FSSI, small businesses win about 70% of the federal opportunities going through the BPAs.
- 1/3 of those who competed and met the requirements were awarded blanket purchase agreements (BPA).
- The government has taken steps to enable small businesses to be very competitive by increasing the minimum order size and the delivery time to 3-4 days.

**MYTH: FSSI BPA vendors do not carry items that I previously purchased.**

**FACTS:**

- The product you previously purchased may not be Trade Agreement Act (TAA) compliant, or
- It may be essentially the same as a product required to be purchased from AbilityOne (in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 8.703).

**MYTH: If I go to an FSSI BPA vendors' retail store or website, I should receive FSSI BPA pricing on all items purchased.**

**FACT:** Not all products offered at vendors' retail stores or on their websites are in compliance with the FAR and therefore cannot be offered under the BPAs. End users must check GSA Advantage if they are not sure about receiving the FSSI BPA price on items to verify whether they are on contract.